

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (currently amended). Separation module comprising at least one bundle of ceramic capillaries (9), said capillaries having external diameters in the range of from 0.3 mm to 10 mm, and internal diameters of from 0.1 mm to 8 mm wherein a distance is established between capillaries (9) by joining their endings in an end-plate through which their endings pass at a defined distance from each other or by winding the individual capillaries with film strips of a curable material which defines a distance between the individual capillaries, and curing.

Claim 2 (previously presented). Separation module according to claim 1, wherein said capillaries are combined at their endings by perforated plates and further comprising a housing, which encloses the bundle, the housing having an inlet and/or outlet pipe in fluid communication with the inside of the capillaries for a first material flow and/or an outlet pipe in fluid communication with the innerspace between the capillaries for a second material flow, wherein the distance between the capillaries is kept constant by spacers (6).

Claim 3 (canceled).

Claim 4 (currently amended). Separation module according to Claim 1, wherein said external diameters range from 1 mm to 2.5 mm and said internal diameters range from 0.7 to 1.5 mm.

Claim 5 (currently amended). Separation module according to Claim 1, wherein the distance between capillaries (9) and in the capillary bundle is ~~≤10~~ 0.05 - 10 mm.

Claim 6 (previously presented). Separation module according to Claim 5, wherein said distance is < 3mm.

Claim 7 (currently amended). Separation module according to Claim 1, wherein the distance between the capillaries (9) ~~and in~~ in the bundle is established as a function of the permeate flow and permeate medium.

Claim 8 (previously presented). Separation module according Claim 1, wherein the capillary bundles have a diameter of from 10 mm to 250 mm.

Claim 9 (previously presented). Separation module according to Claim 8, wherein said diameter is from 20 mm to 50 mm.

Claim 10 (previously presented). Separation module according to Claim 1, wherein the capillaries (9) have, on the inside, a thin membrane (M) having separation activity.

Claim 11 (previously presented). Separation module according to Claim 1, wherein the capillaries (9) have, on the outside, a thin membrane (M) having separation activity.

Claim 12 (previously presented). Separation module according to Claim 1, comprising built-in spacers as baffle plates (6) for controlling the flow in the space between the capillaries (9).

Claim 13 (previously presented). Separation module according to Claim 1, wherein several bundles of capillaries are arranged parallel to each other in a housing and the separation module comprises a feed space and a permeation space.

Claim 14 (currently amended). Separation module according to Claim 13, wherein the housing ~~consists~~ is comprised of stainless steel and a sealing of feed space and permeation space is effected by an elastomer O-ring, a graphite seal or a sealing compound.

Claim 15 (currently amended). Separation module according to Claim 13, wherein the housing ~~consists~~ is comprised of ceramic and a sealing of feed space and permeation space is effected at joints by ceramic- or glass-containing slip, paste or adhesive.

Claim 16 (previously presented). A membrane reactor comprising the separation module of Claim 1, wherein the individual capillaries are coated with a catalyst or are themselves a catalyst or the catalyst is otherwise present in the module.

Claim 17 (withdrawn). Method for producing the separation module of Claim 1, wherein joining is effected by fixing premoulded capillaries (9) in bundle form parallel to one another and a distance apart which is determined by requirements of material transport and flow in the subsequent separation module, and connecting said capillaries in a substance-impermeable manner at least in the planes of the two end faces of the future separation module.

Claim 18 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein sintered ceramic capillaries (9) are placed in holes at the bottom of a mould (8), this mould (8) is filled with a polymer-, ceramic- and/or glass-containing casting compound (10) and, after demoulding, the projecting ends of the capillaries (9) are cut off.

Claim 19 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein sintered ceramic capillaries are inserted into perforated discs and the joints between the two are sealed with the use of polymer-, ceramic- or glass-containing slips, pastes or adhesives.

Claim 20 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein sintered ceramic capillaries are inserted into unsintered ceramic perforated discs and are firmly connected by shrinkage of the perforated disc.

Claim 21 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein unsintered ceramic capillaries are inserted into unsintered ceramic perforated discs and firmly connected by co-firing.

Claim 22 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein sintered ceramic capillaries (9) are wound with at least one strip (13) of polymer-, ceramic- and/or glass-containing film, braid or woven fabric and firmly connected by shrinkage during curing of the film.

Claim 23 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein unsintered ceramic capillaries (9) are wound with at least one strip (13) of ceramic- and/or glass-containing film, braid or woven fabric and firmly connected by co-firing.

Claim 24 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein the capillaries are coated on their inside or outside walls with a membrane having separation activity and, in the case of a completely ceramic capillary bundle, coating with the membrane (M) having separation activity is effected after completion of the capillary bundle in one step.

Claim 25 (withdrawn). Method according to Claim 17, wherein the capillaries are coated on their inside or outside walls with a membrane having separation activity, wherein a nonceramic component is present in the capillary bundle, and the capillaries are coated with the membrane (M) having separation activity prior to installation in the module.

Claim 26 (previously presented). A membrane separation process, wherein a fluid to be separated is passed through a separation module of Claim 1, having a feed space and a permeation space, and wherein a vacuum is applied to the permeate space (3).